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THE CRITICAL ERROR OF WORLD WAR II. (U)

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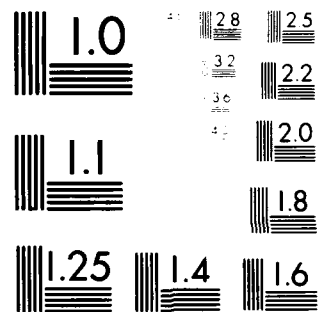
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The Critical Error of World War II

Harold L. Mack

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⑥ THE CRITICAL ERROR
OF WORLD WAR II

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by

⑩ Harold L. Mack
US Army (Retired)

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The National Security Affairs Issue Papers

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This paper is one of a series of brief research studies on national security issues. The series supplements the National Security Affairs Monographs, which are lengthier studies of more general interest. Papers in both series generally are researched and written by the Research Fellows, faculty, students, and associates of the National Defense University and its component institutions, the National War College and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

The purpose of this series is to contribute new insights and background materials to national security policymakers and to others concerned with the many facets of US national security.

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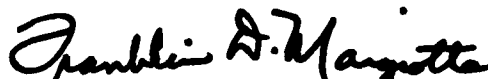
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FOREWORD

In this first contribution to the 1981 series of the National Security Affairs Issue Papers, we are able to share a rare, "over-the-shoulder" view of the 1944 Allied invasion of Europe. Although focusing on an historical episode, Colonel Harold Mack (USA, Retired) stimulates us to think about current applications of logistical planning principles. He thus assists us at National Defense University in achieving the purpose of this new series of publications: to provide another source of intellectual challenge and ideas for the ongoing dialogue essential to make rational policy choices in a rapidly changing world.

Colonel Mack was the originator and chief proponent of the logistical modification to the World War II Operation OVERLORD plan. He therefore is able to provide an original, heretofore unpublished, look at some of the behind the scene factors that affected the Allied invasion and eventual victory. Could victory have come sooner? Writing from the vantage point of one with close knowledge of what was intended versus what was actually achieved, Colonel Mack suggests that stricter adherence to the revised OVERLORD battle plan would have shortened the war by many months. Instead, he describes a schedule made late by political intrigue and sometimes petty bickering among combat generals.

The author reminds us that some of the national security problems confronting the United States today are the direct result of our failure to secure an earlier victory in Europe, before Russian forces reached Germany and Czechoslovakia. In retrospect, the loss of a few months changed the face of Europe. As Lieutenant General John H. Hinrichs (USA, Retired) commented, "This manuscript is right down the alley...and should be published." We agree, and hope that this paper's informed insights will assist in applying the knowledge gained in the past to current security policy problems.


FRANKLIN D. MARGIOT
Colonel, USAF
Director of Research

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

"Do you realize what it means to feed, get ammunition, gasoline, and other supplies for 27,000 men during a scrap (battle) when every ounce of it has to be carried over six to ten miles of places where there are only the remnants of a road, and it must get up otherwise the fight can't go on?"

That question to his family in a 1917 letter underscores the logistics role played in the 91st Division during World War I by then-Captain Harold L. Mack. Born in 1884 in San Francisco and educated there and in New York City, the now-retired Colonel Mack received his officer training at the Presidio of San Francisco before departing for France and WW I combat. Between wars, Colonel Mack headed a successful investment company and held a seat on the New York Stock Exchange. He sold his seat on the Exchange shortly before the 1929 crash. After living in Europe for several years, Colonel Mack returned to California where he held the rank of colonel in the reserve and, at the outbreak of World War II, was put in charge of civilian (coastal) defense at Monterey. Recalled to active duty (as a lieutenant colonel) after the United States entered WW II, Colonel Mack was active in logistics and, particularly, as part of the logistics planning staff for Operation OVERLORD (the code name given to the Allied invasion of Europe at Normandy). Postwar, Colonel Mack returned to Monterey where he was active in numerous civic affairs. His military decorations include the French Legion of Honor, the Belgian Croix de Guerre with Oak Leaf Cluster, and, from the United States, two Silver Stars and one Bronze Star.

THE CRITICAL ERROR OF WORLD WAR II

There can be little question that a shortage of gasoline and ammunition, and other supplies, was primarily responsible for our failure to inflict a decisive defeat on the Germans before the close of 1944.

Responsibility for this serious logistical failure has been blamed on the "Com Zone"* by most of the combat generals. General George S. Patton, Jr., was particularly bitter in this respect and, in a fit of pique and frustration when he saw total victory slip from his grasp because of lack of these vital supplies, even went so far as to accuse the officers and men serving in the Com Zone of being cowardly slackers. I served in the Com Zone and, as Chief of Movements, held one of the key positions in the hard and thankless job of trying to keep the armies adequately supplied. I naturally resent his and the other combat generals blaming us for this situation and will try to show in the following article where the real blame for these failures lies. I admit the Com Zone was not above criticism. It could have done a better job had it been better organized and better commanded, but no matter how efficiently it might have been operated, it could not have improved the supply situation sufficiently to have ended the war in 1944.

A Reappraisal

The true story as to why the armies were short of desperately needed gasoline and ammunition has never before been written. I now propose to write it so that history may reappraise the facts and place the blame for the failure where it belongs.

I have titled this article THE CRITICAL ERROR OF WORLD WAR II. Had the war ended in 1944, the Berlin problem would not today exist and the resulting complications, with which the world is wrestling, would not now be threatening world civilization.

*Communications Zone was the name of the supply network supporting Allied combat forces in the European Theater of Operation during World War II. The "Com Zone" is referred to several times in, among other works, Martin Blumenson's The Patton Papers: 1940-1945 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974), pp. 527, 532, and 536.

To start at the beginning, in July 1943, I arrived in southern England with the 4th Regulating Group, consisting of railroad, shipping, and motor experts, and was met by General Frank Ross. General Ross, Chief of Transportation, separated me from my command and took me with him to London, where he assigned me as one of his staff. He put me in charge of the Intelligence Section. This section was charged with the task of collecting and evaluating all the information regarding roads, bridges, beaches, railroads, canals, ports, and so on, which could be utilized when the invasion took place. We were in constant touch with the French Underground and received valuable information from them.

After about a month at this job, I was summoned to the general's office and told that I was to be entrusted with the preparation of the Supply and Transportation Plan for the European invasion. Unlocking his safe, he brought out the detailed OVERLORD plan, the fine brainchild of General Sir Frederick Morgan, and handed it to me. I was to be given a private office, guarded at all times by an armed sentry, and was to be allowed one officer and one noncom of my choosing to assist me. I selected Captain Don Haley for this job, a brilliant officer, and a Brooklyn-born sergeant named Shapiro, a real character.

The OVERLORD plan was a voluminous document, and we spent many a nervous moment when, at the end of the day, we found a section temporarily missing or misplaced. I cautioned my assistants about the necessity of keeping absolute secrecy about their work. My sergeant, who was typically Brooklyn, said when I cautioned him, "'Coynel,' when dey ast me what I know, I tells 'em I don't know nutting, cause I don't know nutting."

The various parts of the Supply and Transportation Plan gradually took shape. Daily meetings were held with the other supply branches, such as Quartermaster, Signal, Railroads, and Motor Transportation, so that differences could be ironed out and their advice taken. General Napier, Chief of Movements for the British forces, was my opposite number, and I found him very agreeable to work with and very competent. He died shortly after the close of the war.

A Picture Puzzle of Details

Such details as road capacities, rail tonnages, the locations of supply dumps, port capabilities, the number of trucks, freight cars, and locomotives, the ships needed—these and thousands of other details all had to be determined before we could assure

the combat troops that their efforts could be supported with the needed tools of war. It was like putting a picture puzzle together, and all pieces had to fit in their proper place before the invasion could commence.

We had to be extremely careful, in gathering information, so that German Intelligence did not learn that our inquiries were directed toward particular locations in France. Such a disclosure would have been a dead giveaway as to where we intended to land.

We were, therefore, instructed to seek information about localities where we had no intention of landing. I sent my dear pal, Major Hotaling, who succeeded me as head of Intelligence, on various wild goose chases, collecting information about the Spanish Coast, the railroads leading across the Pyrenees, the area around Le Havre, and even landing places in Norway.

In collecting this information, he had to deal with the French Underground, among whom were German agents who swallowed hook, line, and sinker the idea that we planned to land near Le Havre or below the Pyrenees.

In addition, Security Police visited nightly the various offices where planning was taking place, scrutinizing waste baskets and looking around for any scraps of paper that might contain valuable information for the enemy. They would gather all these papers and burn them in the incinerator, but woe be to the officer who left any secrets around!

I was instructed to carelessly leave a few scraps relating to the fake landings I was preparing and was duly called on the carpet by the Security Division and threatened with court martial if it occurred again. It did occur several times, and I'm sure the security chief couldn't understand why I wasn't shot as a spy. Of course the top generals, who were in on the ruse, always came to my rescue. After months of this type of planning, it became evident that, based on the original OVERLORD plan with which we were working, we could not land and move enough tonnage to meet the demands of the various armies on their combat missions. The facilities, particularly the railroads and ports which would be captured under the original plan, had not the capacity to enable us to move the huge tonnage needed to supply the armies in the field.

I had constant conferences with the various supply chiefs at Supreme Headquarters and the answer was always the same, namely, "Regardless of how we crowd and stretch the facilities,

we shall not have sufficient capacity to deliver the tonnage needed to support all the armies in their combat missions."

It would be suicidal to put armies in the field without giving them the tools they needed to fight with, just as it would be suicidal to send an expedition across the desert with only half enough water to enable it to reach its destination.

An Idea of Great Importance

It sometimes happens, either by coincidence or accident, that a lowly individual like me finds himself in a position to give birth to an idea of great importance.

General Ross asked me if I had anything to suggest to improve the supply outlook. I replied that I had been working on a plan which might be the answer.

I was completely familiar with the map of France from the months of study I had been giving it. I was always intrigued by the possibility of utilizing the excellent ports and railroads on the southern coast of Brittany fronting on the Bay of Biscay. Quiberon Peninsula, jutting out into the bay, seemed to offer excellent beaches for the landing of supplies because it could be approached from different directions in any kind of weather. One of the best freight railroads in France ran along the coast and, straight from there, east to Paris and Germany.

If these facilities could be secured to us, our problem of adequately supplying all the armies in their combat missions could be solved. But before this could be accomplished, it involved a radical change in the combat plan.

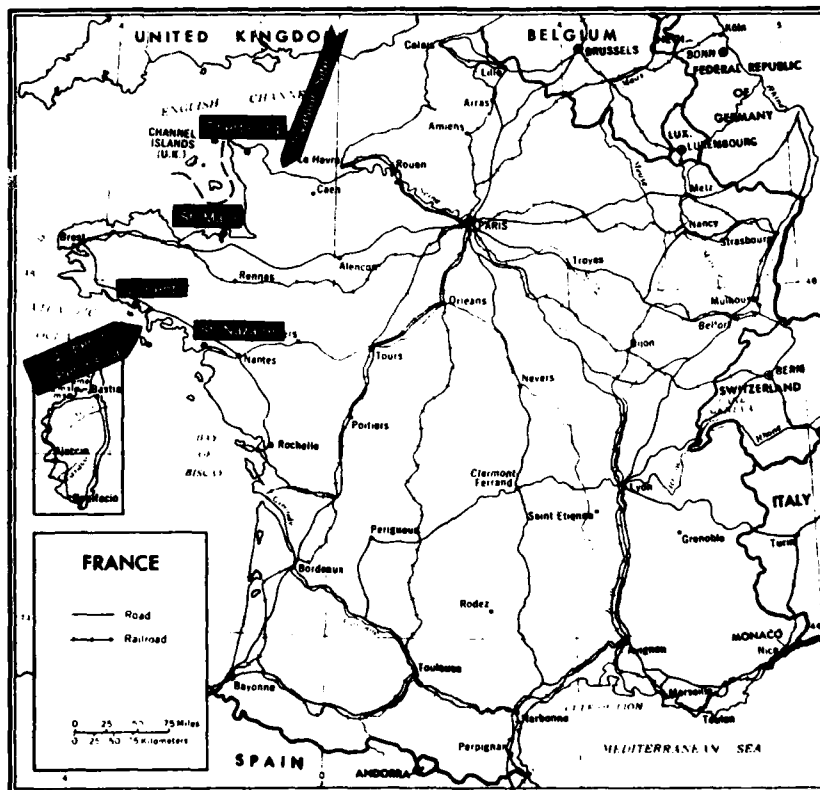
It involved the capture of Lorient, either the capture or isolation of St. Nazaire, and the reduction of the German installations on the islands facing the coast--a combined military and naval operation of major proportions.

After many meetings with the top British and American brass, in which I was ably supported by Colonel Oliver of the Office of Chief of Engineers, it was agreed by Supreme Headquarters and the combined Chiefs of Staff that the plan was sound and feasible. I was given the green light by Supreme Headquarters to include these vital facilities in the logistical plan.

The combat plan was then changed to include the capture of Quiberon Bay, which was to be a main port of supply, and reduction of the installations on the islands facing it. A study

of the map will show that Quiberon Bay was ideally located to receive supplies from the United States. It was closer than the English ports and avoided the dangerous route through the English Channel or the Irish Sea.

It must be understood that a combat plan of the magnitude of OVERLORD is not lightly changed. The change had to be of paramount importance before the top brass would even consider such a solution. It involved tremendous new detailed planning on the part of the staff. The Intelligence Section had to find out exactly what conditions existed in the area planned to be captured. The generals and admirals commanding the forces to be assigned to the new missions had to be consulted as to their plans of campaign.



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The site of the 6 June 1944 Allied invasion of France on the beaches of Normandy, as well as Quiberon Peninsula and other locations mentioned by the author, are noted on this map of France.

The combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington and London, as well as General Eisenhower, approved this change of plans. The operation was given the code name CHASTITY and was a very closely guarded secret. Unfortunately, the best laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley (often go wrong).

The scene now shifts to France, and we shall see what really took place when the invasion got under way.

The Stage Is Set

Under a most complicated system of command for the invasion, British General Bernard Law Montgomery was given temporary and initial command of the 21st Army Group, consisting of all the American, English, and Canadian forces. He was to remain in command until Supreme Headquarters decided that General Omar N. Bradley was to assume command of the American forces, to be known as the 12th Army Group. From then on the American armies and the English armies would fight side by side as equals. On August 1 this was ordered, with Bradley commanding the 12th Army Group, Montgomery commanding the 21st Army Group, and Eisenhower in supreme command. It had been expected that Montgomery would capture Caen immediately on landing, but the unexpectedly strong resistance of the Germans, plus a very unfortunate lack of drive on his part, found him two months later completely stalemated. On August 14, an Associated Press reporter filed the story in England that the 12th Army Group had been turned over to Bradley and taken from Monty's command. This raised a ruckus in the British press, who denounced it as a demotion for Monty and a rebuke to him because of his failure to break out of Caen.

Monty showed himself here in his true colors by refusing to squelch the story, even though he knew that prior to the invasion this plan had been agreed upon. To quote Bradley, "I was puzzled Monty did not squelch it. At the risk of being unjust to Monty, I could only conclude he did not want to." Subsequent events and Monty's memoirs show that Monty never was loyal to Eisenhower or to anyone else but himself and his overwhelming ambition to be Supreme Commander.

The American forces also had been slowed up by the difficulty in fighting in the hedgerows and by the delay in capturing Cherbourg.

Bradley's 12th Army Group consisted of the 1st Army under General Courtney H. Hodges and the 3d Army under Patton. Bradley was assigned the mission of carrying out the CHASTITY

plan. Bradley instructed Patton to detach Major General Troy H. Middleton's VIII Corps to carry it out.

Bradley's 1st Army was to aid Monty in breaking out of Caen and then to turn east, while Patton's 3d Army, with the exception of Middleton's corps, was to swing south and then turn east.

From then on, the top command acted as if the CHASTITY plan was of minor importance. Middleton, with his corps, was given orders to capture the small North Brittany ports and Brest, but was not given the task of carrying out the capture of the far more vital South Brittany ports included in the CHASTITY plan.

The failure to carry out this vital mission was the cause of the supply deficiencies, which, from then on, plagued all the armies in the field and prevented the Allies from obtaining victory in 1944.

Martin Blumenson, Civilian Historian in the Office of the Chief of Military History and author of the splendid book "The Duel for France," makes clear in his book who was responsible for the failure to carry out the vital CHASTITY mission.

As previously stated, General Bradley assigned General Patton to carry it out. Patton detached the VIII Corps under Middleton to operate in Brittany, and Middleton, in turn, ordered Major General John S. Wood of the 4th Armored Division to the specific task of carrying out the CHASTITY plan. General Wood, evidently not fully informed or not understanding the importance of the logistical problems involved, considered it a waste of his combat strength to operate in what he thought was an operation of secondary importance. He had set his heart on participating in the main drive toward Paris, where he could achieve fame and glory along with the other divisions of Patton's army. He therefore sent a message to Middleton, his corps commander, that Rennes was open to easy occupation, and requested that he be allowed to capture this important city, and then join in the main thrust to the east.

Middleton, likewise failing to see the vital importance of capturing Lorient and Quiberon Bay, agreed to this proposal, and told Wood to send only a token force to menace Lorient and Quiberon, but to keep his main body facing east ready to join the big drive toward Paris.

Middleton forwarded this badly conceived change of plans to 3d Army Headquarters, but Major General Hugh J. Gaffey, Patton's chief of staff, saw through Middleton's and Wood's scheme and sent back word that Wood's primary mission was to carry out the Army's CHASTITY plan, and capture Lorient and Quiberon with his entire force.

Wood only halfheartedly complied with this order and, instead of immediately attacking in force, sent word to Middleton that Lorient was too strongly defended for him to attack. Middleton accepted this report without further investigation and delighted Wood by telling him not to risk an attack.

As a matter of fact, it later became clear that had Wood promptly pushed his attack against Lorient, it would have fallen easily. Its defenses were not nearly complete and it was only defended by a few troops.

We cannot, however, put all the blame for this vital error on General Wood. He and Middleton were only division and corps commanders and were not familiar with the major Army strategy as were Eisenhower, Bradley, and Patton, their superior officers.

Reversal Decided at the Top

As early as August 2, both Eisenhower and Bradley decided against wasting great effort in Brittany and, in addition, decided to expend a large part of this weak effort against St. Malo and Brest. Patton, on the other hand--and correctly so--felt that St. Malo and Brest were unimportant and that Middleton's Corps should devote its major effort to the capture of Lorient and Quiberon. Middleton, who had previously been detached from Bradley's command and assigned to Patton, did not understand Patton's way of fighting, and operated in Brittany according to the orderly Bradley concepts instead of the more flamboyant Patton's way of fighting. As a result, Lorient and Quiberon were not captured; the CHASTITY plan of supply was never put into operation, and, although St. Malo and Brest finally were captured, they proved to be completely useless from a logistical standpoint.

Ladislav Farago's magnificent book, "Patton--Ordeal and Triumph," shows most clearly how Eisenhower, Bradley, and Patton did not pay enough attention to logistical problems involved in their combat operations. Not one word is mentioned in this book of the need for giving Patton his own ports and railroads as the CHASTITY plan was intended to do, but,

instead, there is almost a sneering approach to the CHASTITY plan. It appears that Patton was never really informed of the importance of capturing the South Brittany ports to serve his own logistical needs.

After reading "Patton--Ordeal and Triumph," the question arises--Who was responsible for the failure to inform Patton of the vital need to secure the South Brittany ports and the railroads running from them to Paris so Patton could carry on with his magnificent combat talents with full logistical support? Was it jealousy? or lack of confidence in Patton? It is plainly evident that Patton was never given the full implications of the CHASTITY plan. If he had been properly briefed, I am sure he would have seen to it that the supply ports and railroads planned to keep him supplied would have been in his possession as a first priority.

When Patton turned east with his 3d Army, he had a great opportunity to capture a large part of the German forces in what is known as the "Falaise Pocket." He did succeed in capturing many Germans but, because of Monty's failures on the northern flank to close the top of the pocket and Eisenhower's proper refusal to allow Patton's army to operate in the English sector, a large part of the German forces escaped.

Patton and Bradley disagreed completely as to how the war against the Germans should be conducted. Bradley and Patton never really trusted each other from a military standpoint and this distrust cost the Allies dearly. Bradley's memoirs contain many paragraphs showing how he distrusted Patton, and I quote:

The reformation (Patton's), however, was not totally complete, for George was still an impetuous man and even in Europe this impetuous nature continued to make trouble. The first misstep occurred after only 12 days on the beachhead while Third Army was biding its time impatiently in the Cotentin....*

As Middleton's VIII Corps carried Patton's colors around the corner at Avranches to head for the Brittany ports, I ordered George to post a strong force on guard in the center of the Brittany neck. There he could stave off any threat from the east

*OMAR N. BRADLEY--A Soldier's Story, ed. Theodore S. Amussen (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1951), p. 356.

while Middleton's columns raced toward St. Malo, first fortress on the Breton north shore. Meanwhile, as the rest of the Allied front executed its turning movement toward the Seine, First Army was to hold open a passage at Avranches against the German armor that swarmed hastily toward that point. While visiting Middleton in his CP in the neck on August 2, I found him worried over an exposed left flank and rear. Patton had ignored the Group order to establish a strong force in the Brittany neck and instead had ordered Middleton to race on toward Rennes and Brest. As a result Middleton was left with nothing between his extended columns and the main force of the German Seventh Army to his rear.

Though reluctant to disobey an order given him by his Army commander, Middleton was wary over the likelihood of German counterattack. He pointed to his map. 'I hate to attack with so much of the enemy at my rear,' he said, 'especially while it's so exposed. If the other fellow were to break through at Avranches to the coast, I'd be cut off way out here in Brittany.' At that time, Middleton had already passed two infantry and two armored divisions through the corner at Avranches. If the enemy were to break through there, he might have marooned a force in excess of 80,000 men.

'Dammit,' I said angrily to Middleton, 'George seems more interested in making headlines with the capture of Brest than in using his head on tactics. I don't care if we get Brest tomorrow--or ten days later. Once we isolate the Brittany peninsula, we'll get it anyhow. But we can't take a chance on an open flank. That's why I ordered George to block the peninsula neck. . . .'*

Bradley seemed obsessed with the necessity of capturing Brest. He never made the slightest attempt to capture Quiberon Bay and carry out the CHASTITY plan, even though he had an opportunity to utilize the strong French freedom forces which were available and anxious to get into action, and I quote from him:

*BRADLEY, pp. 362-363.

Having foreseen that the enemy would destroy Brest before evacuating that port, we planned on developing Quiberon Bay as a logistical base for the US Armies. Quiberon Bay stretched between the ports of Lorient and St. Nazaire. To use it we would have to construct unloading docks. At the same time we would also clear the port of St. Malo on the north for the importation of coal required by the French.

Despite the enemy's drain on Brittany for additional forces to oppose the Normandy landing, the coastal fringe of that peninsula was held by an estimated 50,000 German garrison troops. To prevent them from destroying the railroads and bridges, Patton was to drive them quickly into the fortress areas around the major ports. Thereafter we would smoke them out. Meanwhile in the thinly populated countryside of Brittany, the French marquis had become a valuable ally. Nighttime air lift had provided them guns, and even a tiny column of jeeps. With the aid of specially trained Allied detachments that had been parachuted into their hide-outs, the French underground blocked the Brittany roads and drove the Germans into their fortified forts. . . .*

This is a fine statement, but nothing was done to implement it.

Bradley's lack of understanding of the supreme need of taking Quiberon Bay is shown when he claims in his memoirs that his rapid advance, which uncovered the channel ports of Le Havre, Rouen, and Antwerp, made the capture of lower Brittany ports unnecessary. This is a ridiculous claim. The channel ports of Le Havre and Rouen never could become major sources of supply for Patton's Army, due to their poor railroad connections and port facilities. Antwerp didn't become a source of supply until November 26, over five months after the landing. By that time, if the Brittany ports had been taken as originally planned, the war could well have been over.

Colonel Robert Allen, Historian of the 3d Army, makes the following significant comments in describing Patton's sweep south and east from the Normandy Peninsula and the results of the failure to secure for his army the proper logistical support.

*BRADLEY, p. 365.

He says that on August 3 the French forces saved the Quiberon Bay area from being converted into a fortress. Then why wasn't it captured? He further states Brittany was in the bag. All that remained was to mop it up. However, the mopup never took place. Why?

Bradley makes the following statement in his memoirs which further places the responsibility to carry out the CHASTITY plan primarily on his shoulders:

This costly siege of Brest [which Middleton's Corps was ordered by Bradley to take] has since been described by some as a wasteful and unnecessary campaign, executed primarily because of blind obedience to an outdated OVERLORD plan that called for its capture. It is true that OVERLORD's premise on the need for those Brittany ports was invalidated just as soon as our rapid advance [italics mine] uncovered the Channel ports and Antwerp. For with the capture of Antwerp, one of the largest and best ports in the world, we scratched our ambitious plans for the construction of a base on Quiberon Bay and wrote off Brest as surplus. Not a ton was to be delivered through either port.*

The "rapid advance" which he refers to did not secure Antwerp until four months later--not what I would call a rapid advance--and when he says the need for those Brittany ports was invalidated because of this rapid advance, he just doesn't know what he is talking about. He wasted the efforts of Middleton's corps in front of Brest, which never was considered to be a possible supply port, and never made an attempt to secure Quiberon Bay. One would think Brest and Quiberon Bay were one and the same thing and that it was necessary to secure both as ports of supply before Quiberon Bay could be utilized.

Supplies Short, Not Misrouted

Patton, having broken out of the Normandy Peninsula, continued his drive to the east and almost immediately began to experience a shortage of needed supplies. His gasoline receipts were dwindling. He wrongly claimed, however, that the indications were that it was a deliberate withholding of gas from

*BRADLEY, p. 366.

his army by higher authorities. He was wrong in this respect. There just wasn't enough to go around. The failure to capture the vital South Brittany ports was already taking its toll.

Eisenhower was right when he refused to let Patton operate as a lone wolf, and to give him the full logistical support he needed at the expense of the northern armies. They all had to operate as a team. The northern armies were also short of gas and ammunition, and their movements, likewise, were curtailed.

Patton complains most unfairly that he was deprived of supplies because "Com Zone" was diverting them from him by bringing food to Paris. Of course, we were sending supplies to Paris, but Paris had to have food or its millions would starve. It was another job "Com Zone" had to do with limited facilities. He likewise sneeringly states that "Com Zone" consumed 25 million gallons of gasoline in moving its headquarters from "battered Cherbourg" to "luxurious Paris." How he expected "Com Zone" to function hundreds of miles to the rear, when the combat zone had advanced close to the German border, shows a lack of understanding of the problems involved and a small pettiness, ill-related to his magnificent combat qualities. He could descend to a low depth of bad manners and pettiness and then rise to the most brilliant heights of generalship.

There can be no question that Patton understood how to fight Germans better than Bradley or Montgomery, or any other combat general. He knew Germany was on the run, he knew his rapid advance had thrown them off balance, and he knew the proper way to beat them.

While Montgomery and Bradley planned classical campaigns, slow and methodical, Patton displayed a quality of original thinking, improvising, hitting hard and fast, and anticipating in advance the enemy moves. Unfortunately for all concerned, his genius was curtailed and his victorious advance stopped because of the initial failure to carry out the CHASTITY plan, needed to keep him supplied.

He says that by September 1 his army was short of everything--gas, rations, blankets, winter clothing.

Patton disagreed with Monty's proposed strategy designed to attack in the north by an all-out assault and frontal attack. He wanted to attack to the south of the line and was positive he could penetrate the Rhine by October if properly supplied. He

instead was allowed by Eisenhower to advance in a very limited manner, but the supply problem again thwarted him.

Meanwhile, ever since August 1, Brest was still being attacked by Middleton's corps of the 3d Army. Brest was finally captured late in September, but turned out to be useless as a supply base, something we knew long before the invasion.

Patton finally breached the Moselle River, but the stop-and-start policy, made necessary because of lack of supplies, made the fighting far more deadly and far less effective than it otherwise would have been.

Patton, in a fit of frustration, suggested to Supreme Headquarters that "Com Zone" be stripped of its powers to procure and distribute supplies. This showed his lack of logistical knowledge. "Com Zone" had no power to determine to whom to distribute supplies. The demands were made on "Com Zone" by the units in the field and okayed by Supreme Headquarters. "Com Zone" relied entirely on the railroads and trucks to deliver them. As Chief of Movements, my hands were tied by the lack of port and transport facilities of all types, something the top brass all knew about before the invasion. You can't move thousands of tons every day without the facilities needed. The Brittany ports in the Bay of Biscay would have solved the problem.

Patton continued to complain, and I can't say I blame him. He said his army was tied up from September 25 to November 8. All supplies were rigidly curtailed. Everything was in short supply and would continue to be so for some time.

One result of keeping Patton's army immobilized was to give the Germans a chance to throw their full weight against Monty and Bradley. The Germans no longer had to protect their southern flanks from Patton's army. Monty's army, as a result, received a costly defeat at Arnheim. It was badly conceived and carried out.

Finally on October 25 Lieutenant General John C. H. Lee, Commanding General of "Com Zone," visited Patton. Patton hated Lee and blamed him for not providing the needed supplies. Now, I have no love myself for Lee, but it was not his fault that Patton was deprived of his needed gas, ammunition, and other supplies. If all the available supplies had been diverted from Monty and Bradley and given to Patton, he could have thrust deeply into German territory, but the northern armies would have been immobilized and the Germans would have quickly taken advantage of this and, operating on his

flank, given Patton a bad time and possibly destroyed him. What was needed were sufficient supplies for all the armies. Then, with the pressure kept on the Germans by Bradley and Monty, Patton could have administered a vital blow against the enemy and, with his genius for combat, could have ended the war long before it did. The Battle of the Bulge and its near disaster to our forces would never have taken place.

A Diplomatic General

General Eisenhower showed himself to be a man who had an understanding of one of the major problems involved in fighting a war with the British and Russians as allies. He understood only too well the dual purpose in back of many of the British proposals, and that it was necessary to avoid many of their obvious attempts to use the American war effort to further purely British considerations and, at the same time, use their valuable aid. He was likewise fully aware of the wily Russian intrigues, but, like a tightrope walker, had to balance himself between the need for utilizing their tremendous war effort and of avoiding as far as possible falling into their web.

He would have been fully justified in relieving Montgomery of his command, but he showed almost superhuman restraint in continuing to work with the unpleasant Montgomery in spite of his frequent attempts to undermine Eisenhower and the other American generals.

Eisenhower, after his serious initial error in failing to see that Bradley carried out the CHASTITY plan and that the necessary logistical support on the Bay of Biscay was assured, became a sound strategist. No one else could have utilized the efforts of his allies, so needed to win the war, as he did. A man less dedicated and less unselfish would have wrecked the war efforts on the rocks of British selfishness, Russian intrigue, and Montgomery's intransigence and conceit. He knew, and never forgot, that the basic strategy needed was to keep the Allies from fighting among themselves.

A further conclusion comes to my mind after reading so very many postwar books and second guesses.

I feel credit for the final victory belongs primarily to junior combat officers, noncoms, and GIs who seized opportunities as they arrived. Grand strategy didn't win the war. It was combat tactics that did it. The grand strategy was completely botched up after the first stages of the invasion, because of logistical failures.

General Patton was notorious for his lack of logistical knowledge, but major blame cannot be attached to him for the failure to carry out the CHASTITY plan. He was under Bradley's orders. Middleton's corps, after being detached from the 3d Army, operated as directed by Bradley. It was Bradley's responsibility that the corps did not carry out the CHASTITY plan.

General Patton was a great combat general. He saved the Allies in the Battle of the Bulge by a magnificent display of military tactics. His great faults were his contempt for controlling orders from higher echelons and his refusal to pay sufficient attention to his logistical needs. He was not a Robert E. Lee or a Ulysses S. Grant, but he was a Stonewall Jackson. His death robbed us of the one general, who, if he had lived to fight in our Korean forces, would have taught the Chinese and North Koreans a lesson they would still remember.

To sum up, "Com Zone" could have done a much better job had it had a different organization. Lee, its commanding general, was not the man for the command. The whole supply setup from Supreme Headquarters down was badly organized. It could not have adequately supplied the combat forces without the facilities of the South Brittany ports and railroads.

Bradley failed to carry out his assigned mission to secure the south Brittany ports for several reasons. First, he overestimated the ability of the German forces in Brittany to be a real threat to our flanks and against our greatly superior forces. Second, he never really trusted Patton and his tactics. Third, he underestimated the logistical need for obtaining the use of Quiberon Bay and the railroads running east from there. These were most costly mistakes.

"The Wheels of the Gods"

"The wheels of the Gods grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly fine."

All the postwar memoirs of leading generals, which read so smoothly and reveal nothing but success, can't hide the facts, which history has the right to know. You can't fight modern war without the tools. The science of logistics should be reexamined at all our service schools and war colleges.

Many of the postwar problems confronting us today are the direct result of our failure to secure victory in 1944--long before the Russians were anywhere near Germany and

Czechoslovakia. There would have been no Battle of the Bulge with its heavy casualties, and there would have been no Berlin and East German problem had our drive not been halted by our supply failures.

Yes, the wheels of the Gods grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly fine—and chickens have a way of coming home to roost.

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